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Office of the Dean



October 24, 1986

Mr. Michael Gardner, Editor
Louisville Courier Journal
525 West Broadway
Louisville, Kentucky 40202

Dear Mr. Gardner:

In your interview with National Public Radio (on 16 October 1986) you commented on the Afghan Media Project, funded by Congress and administered by USIA:

"They are training these propagandists and they are going to go out and prepare and disseminate propaganda on behalf of Afghanistan, and that propaganda will enter the pipeline of news in America as legitimate news, not as propaganda and, therefore, dilute the stream of news. It just seems to me to be the wrong thing to do -- the wrong thing journalistically, the wrong thing morally, the wrong thing on any count."

That's quite a mouthful. For the sake of clarity, it would help to know if you spoke in your capacity as editor-in-chief of just one U. S. newspaper or as president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

The Afghan Media Project has received most favorable coverage in many U. S. newspapers. Please find enclosed a few examples. I recommend for your special perusal an editorial from The Daily Free Press, an independent student newspaper at Boston University. It is heartwarming to see young Americans recognize the obligation of teaching the ideal and practice of a free press in foreign lands, in particular in those lands where free reporting is unknown or outlawed by occupying powers. It is, at the same time, staggering to hear a spokesman of the American press denounce with pomp and piety a project about which he so obviously knows nothing.

Sincerely,

H. Joachim Maitre
Dean ad Interim

HJM/pr

Enclosures